



## Child Find and Evaluation

Child Find under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act refers to the local education agency's obligation to locate, identify, and evaluate all children with disabilities.

As a member of Minnesota Valley Education District, Saint Peter Public Schools' child find and evaluation process is developed in accordance with the requirement of nondiscrimination and is in alignment with the District's Total Special Education System plan (TSES).

Saint Peter Public Schools does not discriminate in education on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

The child find and evaluation process is designed to identify students with disabilities such that there is no delay in special education referrals or evaluations for students who may be English Language Learners as per the child find requirements described in C.F.R. § 300.111.

### **Philosophy of Special Education**

Saint Peter Public Schools recognizes that people with disabilities are first and foremost people, worthy of equal treatment, respect, and opportunities. Special education is a process to ensure that every student has access to the general education curriculum with the opportunity to participate in general education classrooms to the fullest extent possible. This provides a sense of belonging, value, and worth as a part of the community.

Special education supports students in using compensatory strategies necessary to reach their highest potential in the following areas:

- Academic skills and knowledge base,
- Ability to develop and maintain meaningful interpersonal relationships,
- Knowledge and skills to access vocations that are financially and/or emotionally satisfying,
- Ability to deal with change, problem-solve and function effectively in a variety of settings,
- Ability to self-advocate and make healthy choices which impact their emotional, social and physical well-being.

Special education is a process involving student, parents, administrators, teachers, education specialists, and other community members to give students the independence to pursue interests through lifelong learning, to contribute to family and community, and to be productive members of society.

## **A continuum of services**

Our district's continuum of services is flexible and supportive of combinations of special education supplementary aids, services and supports available across the entire spectrum of instructional settings. This encourages innovative instructional models which maintain the least restrictive environment and more closely address student needs. These special education services include:

- General education class services with supplementary aids and services including:
  - Related Services
  - Special Education Teacher Support Services
  - Collaborative Team Teaching
  - Intervention Teams
  - Transition services
- Special education resource room
- Special class services
  - Part-time and full-time in district school's self-contained programs or part-time and full-time in specialized schools like alternative programs and/or Federal setting 4 level programs.
- Homebound instruction
- Homebased instruction
- Hospital and private residential setting services

Our vision for a single, seamless and unified service delivery system for all embraces the firm legal mandate to educate students with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Special education teachers focus their efforts on the needs of the student that are derived from the disability in the evaluation report. It establishes the requirement that all students be held to high academic and behavioral standards. Finally, it provides for far greater flexibility in creating high-quality and innovative instructional designs for students with disabilities who require special education services.

## **Special Education Referral Process**

### **Referrals for children aged 3 to 6:**

Saint Peter Early Childhood leads a Community-based Early Childhood Professional Learning Community. The EC PLC has members from a variety of organizations serving early childhood children. Groups include but are not limited to Headstart, private daycare centers, in-home daycares and Childcare Aware. Each year information is shared with the group regarding the referral process and the HELP ME GROW website. Communication with county agencies and health care providers takes place on an as needed basis. Many referrals from these sources as well as parents come through the HELP ME GROW website. Information regarding the HELP ME GROW website can be found on the Saint Peter School District website.

Early Childhood Screening is held three times a year in Saint Peter Schools and is source of many referrals. Children ages 3-kindergarten who have not been screened are invited to attend. The school district has a student information system in place that allows tracking of

screening data. Screening results are reviewed and if there are indicators of delays or concerns the file is brought to the Early Childhood Special Education Child Study meeting and parents are contacted to gather more information and offered an assessment if appropriate

Once referrals are received and information is gathered, they are taken to the Saint Peter Early Childhood Special Education Child Study meeting. Meetings are held at the minimum of twice monthly. Referrals are reviewed and assigned to an ECSE teacher. The ECSE teacher contacts the parents for additional information and to arrange an assessment if needed.

### **Referrals for school age children:**

Referrals for special education for school age children are initiated through the school's problem solving team process.

### **Problem Solving Team (PST)**

Teachers and/or teacher teams who have a concern about a student's academic, social/emotional and/or behavior performance begin the special education referral process by making a referral to the school's Problem Solving Team (PST). Upon receiving the referral, the PST review student achievement and behavior data, and they will gather input about the student from the student's other teachers. The PST will discuss the concerns about the student and determine one or two evidence based interventions to be implemented with the student. After the interventions have been implemented for a sufficient period of time, the PST will review student progress using data from various sources to determine if the student has shown sufficient progress using the specified interventions. If the interventions are successful, the teacher will continue to implement the interventions the PST will determine if there is a need to continue monitoring the student's progress. If the interventions are not successful, the PST will determine if additional interventions should be tried or make a referral to the Student Assessment Team (SAT). The PST will monitor at least two interventions before making a referral to the SAT.

### **Student Assessment Team (SAT)**

The student assessment team consists of special education teachers, school psychologist, speech therapist, social worker and other related service providers. This team meets to review teacher and parent concerns as well as the interventions that have been implemented. Based on teacher and parent input, school records, and any previous evaluations which have been conducted by school or outside agencies, the SAT determines if a special education assessment is warranted. After an evaluation is completed, the assessment team meets to determine if the student is eligible for special education services based on state eligibility requirements. If the student is eligible, the team develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to address identified needs. Services may be provided directly to the student as described and listed on page 2 in the "*A continuum of services*" section of this document.

## **Referral Steps**

1. Teacher/Team makes a referral to PST for assistance
2. PST reviews referral and gathers input about student. The PST in each school building meets on a scheduled basis and as needed throughout the school year.
  - South Elementary - Rtl team meets monthly
  - North Elementary - PST meets monthly
  - Saint Peter Middle School - PST meets bi-monthly
  - Saint Peter High School - PST meets every two weeks
3. PST determines and implements at least two evidence-based interventions.
4. PST reviews classroom and other data about student progress after interventions have been implemented.
5. If successful, PST will determine if continued monitoring is necessary.
6. If not successful, PST will determine if additional interventions will be tried or if a referral to SAT is necessary.
7. Referral to SAT, if necessary.

## **Referral Considerations**

- At least two pre-referral interventions in the classroom are required by due-process, and they need to be evidence-based and documented.
- Interventions need to be implemented and documented consistently and accurately.
- Resources for evidence-based interventions need to be readily available.
- The referral process for PST and SAT are clearly defined, consistent throughout the district, and user friendly for teachers and teams.
- Instructional setting is based on student needs, not on staff resources available.
- General education teachers have access to resources needed to include students with disabilities in their curriculum.
- Related service staff schedules are consistent and aligned with student need.

## **Referrals from parents, physicians, private and public programs, and health and human services agencies:**

Any person or agency wanting to make a referral for a student for a special education assessment is encouraged to contact the school of enrollment and request that the building's Problem Solving Team meet and consider the request for assessment and any additional information supporting this request. A representative of the building's Problem Solving Team will ensure that a Release of Information is signed by the student's parent to facilitate discussions with any agencies making the request on behalf of the child. Following an Assessment Determination Meeting which will include the parents and any referring agencies representative, the family will be given a Prior Written Notice (PWN) indicating the team's decision regarding conducting an evaluation and a copy of their Procedural Safeguards.

**Referrals for students in private schools:**

Parents of students enrolled in private schools or representatives of private schools who wish to refer a child enrolled at a private school in the Saint Peter school district for a special education assessment are asked to contact the school office to refer the student. A representative of the building's Problem Solving Team will invite both the parent and a representative from the private school to An Assessment Determination Meeting. Following the meeting, the family will be given a Prior Written Notice (PWN) indicating the team's decision regarding conducting an evaluation and a copy of their Procedural Safeguards.

**Referrals for students in Care and Treatment Facilities:****Hoffmann Learning Center**

Parents of students, representatives of a child's home school, and/or representatives of agencies, including the Leo Hoffmann Center who wish to refer a child enrolled in the Hoffmann Learning Center for a special education assessment are asked to contact the Hoffmann Learning Center Lead Teacher, to refer the student. An Assessment Determination Meeting will be held and following the meeting, the family will be given a Prior Written Notice (PWN) indicating the team's decision regarding conducting an evaluation and a copy of their Procedural Safeguards.

**Minnesota State Security Hospital**

Parents of students, guardians, outside agencies, and/or State Hospital staff who wish to refer a student (ages 16-21) who is a patient at the Minnesota State Security Hospital, are asked to contact the Saint Peter Public Schools Special Education Teacher who is assigned to the Minnesota State Security Hospital. An Assessment Determination Meeting will be held and following the meeting, the family will be given a Prior Written Notice (PWN) indicating the team's decision regarding conducting an evaluation and a copy of their Procedural Safeguards.